



Jones County

Water Meter Replacement Project - 2013

Frequently Asked Questions

When will the project begin?

Initial phases of this project will begin in July of 2013.

What is AMI?

AMI stands for Automated Metering Infrastructure. It is a method of using communication technology to read meters remotely without having to access the meter located in meter boxes in the ground.

How does it work?

Jones County has chosen a Fixed based network that provides two-way communication from the Host computer to strategically located Base Stations. The County is replacing the water meters throughout the service territory with new meters equipped with a meter transceiver. The meter transceiver is used to collect and transmit meter reading data, unique identification numbers, operating status and various alarms and transmit the data at regular intervals to the Base Stations.

Why is the County undertaking this effort?

Automated meter systems are quickly becoming the standard for utilities around the country. The County has used the manual read meters since the beginning of the water system in 1975. These new devices allow for more accurate and faster collection of water usage readings than the current manual method and improve safety conditions for County staff. Currently, the meter readers must open every meter box to obtain a reading from the meter. Introducing automatic meter reading as the standard for Jones County is one of the ways we can better serve our customers and improve the overall efficiency of the water department.

How many meters will be changed?

Approximately 3,900. The County will be replacing (all) active water customer's meter.

Will the electronic device on the meter interfere with other electronic equipment?

No. The radio transmission operates in compliance with FCC regulations to avoid interference with other electronic devices.

Is this part of a fixed (closed) network?

Yes. The fixed network will collect readings at fixed data collection points and transmits them electronically for billing purposes without staff needing to go to the location of the meters. Fixed networks can allow a utility company to provide customers with Internet access to their reading information on a more frequent basis than their bill.

Can I access daily readings from the meter online?

Yes, when system is installed water customers will have the ability to access their water consumption online.

Do I have to be home for the meter replacement work?

No. Since the water meters are located outside of the home, you will not need to be home for the replacement work.

What happens if I have a problem after the installation?

If you have a leak, low pressure or some other problem after the installation, or at any other time, please contact the Jones County Water Department @ (252) 448-8000 to report your concern. Because your water will be turned off temporarily during the meter change process, you may experience a brief period of air or discolored water. In most cases briefly running your cold water will clear this situation.

Why is the water meter being replaced?

To upgrade the meter to one capable of communicating with the AMR equipment, and to replace aging meters after they have reached the end of their life cycle. With the introduction of newer technology, the existing meters are not able to communicate using the AMR technology. The newer meters will save labor time, prevent recording errors, minimize wear and tear on vehicles, minimize the need for County employees to access the meter pit, and decrease the need to estimate accounts due to severe weather conditions.

Does the meter have to be replaced?

Yes. All meters will be changed to the new automatic meter reading technology.

Has this new AMR equipment been tested for accuracy and reliability?

Yes, meters come pretested along with results directly from the manufacturer. The radio device will be tested for accuracy during the meter collection process regularly.

How does AMR benefit customers?

- Improved customer service by increasing accuracy of meter readings.
- Minimized need to access meters at the property.
- Reduction in estimated bills.

Will my water bill go up?

Possibly. Older meters tend to lose accuracy as they age and therefore do not measure all the water going through them. The new water meter will accurately measure the water that you use. All new meters are tested prior to delivery by the manufacturer to ensure that they register properly. If you see a higher bill immediately upon the new meter installation, it is likely the old meter was running slow.

Can I cover up the meter after the installation?

No. Access needs to be available at all times. There will still be occurrences when meter technicians will visit the meter on site to perform routine maintenance or verify high readings. Obstructions to the meter box are subject to removal by County personnel.

What if there is something blocking or in front of the meter?

Please keep access to the water meter available at all times to ensure it is accessible for any potential emergency that would require the meter to be turned off. Be careful during the leaf season to not cover your water meter with leaf piles.

Can I read the meter?

No. (Only) County staff is authorized to open the meter lid.

How will I know that you have my reading & not someone else's?

Each radio frequency device has a unique identification number, which is transmitted along with the meter reading. The unique number is compared to your account record to ensure a match.

Does this mean no more meter readers?

Yes. However County staff will continue to visit your property for routine service, maintenance or repair. As always we will continue to respond to all water emergencies.

If you have any questions concerning this project feel free to contact me.

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